

time to reflect on the ways that our political process has been injected by reprehensible violence. In America, our democracy flows from the ballot box, not from the barrel of a gun—period.

In the meantime, for the second time in as many months, law enforcement faces an even more urgent task: completing a thorough, swift, and transparent investigation into the circumstances of yesterday's close call.

The American people deserve answers. They deserve assurance that a former President whom tens of millions of Americans have nominated once again will receive every appropriate measure of security. And they ought to receive them without delay.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now on another matter, I have repeatedly warned colleagues on both sides against setting aside America's interests in pursuit of closer relations with foreign leaders who they think share their values.

I made it clear to Washington Democrats that whatever kudos the Paris climate deal earned them with European greens, punishing America for producing affordable, reliable, and abundant energy was welcome news to China, the world's leading emitter of carbon, and to Russia, which would weaponize Europe's own reliance in due course.

Likewise, I have urged fellow Republicans to recognize that despite whatever affinity we might be expected to hold for a Hungarian ruling party that professes traditional values, legitimizing Victor Orban's reckless obeisance to China, Russia, and Iran is not in America's interests.

And I have been clear-eyed about the regimes with which the United States shares neither interests nor values, and acted accordingly. For example, the strategic case for maximum pressure and credible deterrence against Iran, the world's most active state sponsor of terror, is compelling enough on its own. Weakening sanctions in exchange for empty promises on nuclear proliferation is not in America's strategic interests; neither is responding to proxy violence with half measures.

The only way to achieve measurable improvements to the security of America's interests in Iran's backyard is to change Iran's calculus. This is, of course, an opportunity for the United States and allies with common interests in the region to work more closely together in applying meaningful pressure on Tehran—an opportunity as yet unseized.

But lest anyone forget, just as Tehran's export of terror threatens America's interests, its repression at home is an affront to American values. Today is the second anniversary of the beating, detention, and murder of Mahsa Amini at the hands of Iran's morality police. Tehran's thugs killed another 500 people and detained thou-

sands more who took to the streets in protest.

Today, Iranian women are continuing their protest against the regime's repressive morality laws. Many are walking the streets without head coverings, and 34 political prisoners have gone on a hunger strike. Tehran is marking the anniversary in its own way: placing Ms. Amini's surviving family under unofficial house arrest.

Further east, in Kabul, another group of medieval theocrats is dragging Afghan women and girls even further backward into the familiar repression of Taliban rule. A new "vice and virtue law" amounts to an even more severe crackdown on education for Afghan girls, with even tighter restrictions on women's behavior in public.

Like in Iran, Taliban repression is not difficult to recognize as abhorrent, and the latest developments are an outcome many of us saw coming years ago. Unfortunately, they are also a shameful reminder of a decision that damaged American interests and a sales campaign that denied observable reality. Recall that as the Taliban surged back into power in Kabul, President Biden insisted that "human rights will be the center of our foreign policy." Remember how the President's National Security Advisor declared that the administration was "absolutely resolutely committed" to "alleviate the burden that [Afghan] women and girls will face in the days ahead."

I am curious how the administration would rate the effectiveness of that commitment. I wonder whether it thinks its confidence in so-called over-the-horizon counterterrorism has paid off.

And when the administration's special envoy warns that its "patience with the Taliban is running out," I can't help but ask why on Earth any such patience would align with America's interests in the first place, let alone our values.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Kevin Gafford Ritz, of Tennessee, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The senior Senator from Illinois.

TRUMP ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, like many Americans yesterday afternoon,

I heard reports of what Federal law enforcement is investigating as a possible assassination attempt on former President Trump while he was golfing in Florida. Thankfully, the former President was not harmed, and there were no injuries, and the subject was quickly taken into custody.

I am grateful for the work of the Secret Service and their law enforcement partners to keep the President and those around him safe.

My staff was briefed by the Secret Service last night, and there is an active investigation into this incident as law enforcement gathers more details about what happened. As I have said many times, there is no place for violence in our country no matter what the motive. It must come to an end.

SIREN ACT

Madam President, on a different topic, a recent report from The Wall Street Journal had a stark headline. It read: "Your Ambulance Is on the Way, ETA: 65 Minutes."

Across rural America, nearly 5 million Americans live in an ambulance desert, where access to critical emergency care is limited, and in eight States, there were fewer than three ambulances for every 1,000 square miles of land. Think about it. If you or a loved one experienced cardiac arrest or an overdose—when seconds truly matter—you may not be able to receive timely care; and across rural Illinois, EMS personnel are often the only healthcare providers around, with many being volunteers.

To keep our rural communities thriving, we must ensure our first responders are ready for the call. So in 2018, 6 years ago, I worked with then-Republican Senator Pat Roberts, of Kansas, to pass into law a bill called the SIREN Act. I was inspired by a visit from Mark Kennedy, a paramedic from Nauvoo, IL, in Hancock County, who told me some of the challenges they were facing. The SIREN Act provides Federal funding for rural fire and EMS Agencies for recruitment, certification courses, and purchasing equipment—everything from Naloxone to power stretchers. Over the past 5 years, we have steadily increased funding for this small but important program. In total, we have sent \$40 million to rural communities in 42 States, both red and blue.

The SIREN Act is up for reauthorization now. Senator SUSAN COLLINS, of Maine, and I have teamed up in recent years to increase the funding for it and on legislation to extend funding for another 5 years. Our bill is endorsed by the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Firefighters, and the National Rural Health Association. Last December, it unanimously passed the Senate.

This week, the House is scheduled to take it up. I applaud the sponsors for their work in the House to advance the bill out of committee by a 46-to-nothing vote, and I urge the House to

quickly pass out the SIREN Reauthorization Act this week.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Madam President, on another health-related topic, the question of women's reproductive freedom continues to be a matter of importance in the upcoming election.

At the Presidential debate last week, it became clear that the two candidates could not be further apart on the issue. The former President took credit for the "great service" he said he did in erasing the constitutional right under *Roe v. Wade*. On the other hand, Vice President HARRIS asked us to consider what abortion bans mean for young survivors of rape or incest who are forced to carry pregnancies to term or for women who miscarry and are repeatedly denied access to life-saving care.

That is the world we live in today because of the Dobbs decision, because of Donald Trump and his success in choosing three ultraconservative Supreme Court Justices who overruled *Roe v. Wade*.

Make no mistake, the former President sees the polls, and he knows that limiting women's access to making their own decisions on reproductive care and choice is wildly unpopular, even in conservative red States. That is why former President Trump is twisting himself into knots trying to have it both ways: taking credit for overruling *Roe v. Wade* to appease his base while refusing to acknowledge all of the suffering that has resulted.

THE RIGHT TO IVF ACT

Madam President, when *Roe v. Wade* was overruled, anti-choice politicians warned us that it would only be the beginning of policies that limit women's reproductive freedoms, and for once, they were telling the truth. The overruling of *Roe v. Wade* has been accompanied by a troubling increase in fetal personhood laws that threaten access to assisted reproductive technologies, including in vitro fertilization, or IVF.

I might say, before I go any further, that the Acting President *pro tempore* has been a leader on this issue for good reason. She is not only right on the issue, but it is personal to her and her family. I thank her for her leadership.

Earlier this year, after the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that frozen embryos created during IVF were children under the State's wrongful death statute, a national debate ensued. I held a hearing in my Judiciary Committee on this disturbing trend. We heard moving testimony from Jamie Heard, an Alabama woman whose IVF treatment was interrupted by this extreme decision in court. We also heard compelling testimony from the Acting President *pro tempore* herself, Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH, who was able to have her two beautiful children with the help of IVF.

Earlier this year, Senators DUCKWORTH, MURRAY, BOOKER, and SCHUMER introduced the Right to IVF Act, which I am honored to cosponsor.

It establishes a clear and enforceable nationwide right to receive, provide, or cover IVF services and other assisted reproductive technologies. It also expands insurance coverage for such care.

Whether, when, and how to expand one's family is a private, personal matter. Every American should be able to access the care and resources they need to start a family however they choose. Yet, when the Senate last considered this bill in June, only 2—only 2—of 49 Republicans voted to consider the bill. The rest of the Republican caucus filibustered this critical legislation. They say they are for IVF, but they won't vote for the bill that guarantees it will be legally there.

Republicans, led by former President Trump, know that the American people do not support this extreme position and are desperate to fool us into thinking they don't mean what they say.

Well, they will have another chance to show the American people where they really stand on IVF tomorrow because, if Republicans truly support privacy, freedom, and the right to access IVF treatment, they are going to join us on a bipartisan basis to consider this bill. They can't have it both ways. They can't claim to support IVF while voting against legislation that protects the rights of families to make that decision.

I might add, parenthetically, that this is personal to me as well. I have two beautiful grandkids who are the product of IVF. I am so happy that that happened. My daughter and her husband had just about given up. They couldn't find a way to do it, and they found this one clinic that had tests that were taking place. It was successful, and we had two babies come out of it. They are 12 years old now, and we are so happy to have them. IVF is the reason they are here, and this notion that we are going to play games with this treatment is unfair to the families who are desperate to have children and make them a part of their futures.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 5055 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. COLLINS. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

TRIBUTE TO MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I come to the floor today to share a few words about my friend, the Republican leader, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL.

I have had the privilege to serve alongside the senior Senator from Kentucky here in the U.S. Senate for nearly four decades, spanning 40 sessions of the U.S. Senate.

From the 110th Congress through the 118th, Senator MCCONNELL won support of our caucus to serve as Republican leader. In those secret ballot elections, he often ran unopposed because of his very strong support from our conference. That makes his tenure the longest serving Senate leader in the history of the U.S. Senate.

For the last four decades, Senator MCCONNELL has lived and breathed the U.S. Senate. So when Senator MCCONNELL spoke on the floor in February, announcing that he would step down from his leadership post after the upcoming November election, he took many of us by great surprise.

After all, his love for the U.S. Senate, the State of Kentucky, and for our great country, America, are indisputable. Although his critics and even some of his supporters don't see eye to eye on every issue, I would suggest my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can agree on this: Senator MCCONNELL's service as the Republican leader was hard-earned.

Time and again, MITCH MCCONNELL has shown a shrewd skill set that set the table for his climb up the leadership ladder. Once he got to that top rung, Senator MCCONNELL didn't flinch from his resolve. A keen negotiator, Leader MCCONNELL finessed legislative hurdles, scaled political mountains, and secured policy victories on behalf of the American people.

It takes a steel spine to survive and thrive in the dog-eat-dog world of politics. Senator MCCONNELL's grit, his purpose, and laser focus to deliver are just three of his ironclad leadership traits that our caucus has counted upon since 2006.

Senator MCCONNELL and I have served many years together on the Senate Agriculture Committee, joining forces for family farmers and for rural America.

When I served as chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, we teamed up to deliver historic tax relief that put money back in the people's pockets and helped grow the American economy.

One of the seminal moments of Leader MCCONNELL's tenure took place in 2016 when I chaired the Senate Judiciary Committee. That February, as you remember, Justice Scalia passed away unexpectedly, thus creating a vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court. That vacancy created a once-in-a-generation prospect to shape the highest Court in the land.